

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A frequency monitor circuit (FMC) that is configured
2 to be part of an integrated circuit chip and configured to
3 receive at least one clock whose frequency is to be monitored,
4 each of said clocks being a respective monitored clock, said FMC
5 comprising:

6 a reference window generator (RWG), operative to output
7 a reference window signal, the reference window having a
8 given duration;

9 a monitored clock counter (MCC), responsive to said
10 reference window signal and to any one of the monitored
11 clocks and operative to count all pulses in the respective
12 monitored clock that occur within the duration of said
13 reference window and to output a corresponding pulse count;
14 and

15 at least two comparators, responsive to said pulse
16 count, each comparator being operative to compare said pulse
17 count with a respective given threshold value and to output
18 a corresponding indication of frequency deviation.

1 2. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 1, further
2 comprising a storage and logic module (SLM), responsive to
3 outputs of said comparators, wherein said RCC, said MCC and said
4 comparators are operative to function repeatedly and the SLM is
5 operative to store one or more indication output by the
6 comparators, the stored indications being available for readout.

1 3. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 2, wherein
2 said SLM is further operative to process the stored indications
3 so as to obtain statistical information about the frequency of
4 any of the monitored clocks.

1 4. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 3, wherein
2 said statistical information includes indication of a trend in
3 frequency deviation.

1 5. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 1, formed on
2 an integrated circuit chip that includes at least one clock
3 generator, the output of any of said generators being one of the
4 monitored clocks.

1 6. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 5, wherein
2 said any generator comprises a phased locked loop (PLL).

1 7. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 5, wherein
2 said any generator is a frequency multiplier.

1 8. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 7, wherein
2 said RWG and said MCC form part of said frequency multiplier.

1 9. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 1, further
2 configured to be receptive to a reference clock and wherein said
3 RWG includes a reference clock counter (RCC), responsive to the
4 reference clock and operative to count a given number of
5 reference clock pulses and wherein the beginning of said
6 reference window coincides with the beginning of said counting
7 and the end of said reference window coincides with the end of
8 said counting.

1 10. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 9, wherein
2 the chip includes a clock generator of the frequency multiplier
3 type, whose output is a monitored clock, wherein said RCC and
4 said MCC form part of said clock generator.

1 11. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 1, wherein
2 said at least one clock is at least two clocks, the FMC further
3 comprising a selector, receptive to the monitored clocks and
4 operative to switch any one of them into said MCC.

1 12. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 11, formed
2 on an integrated circuit chip that forms part of a digital
3 system and at least one of the monitored clocks is input to the
4 chip.

1 13. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 11, wherein
2 the duration of said reference window is different for each
3 monitored clock.

1 14. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 11, wherein,
2 for any of said comparators, the respective threshold value is
3 different for each monitored clock.

1 15. An integrated circuit chip, on which there is
2 provided at least one clock whose frequency is to be monitored,
3 each of said clocks being a respective monitored clock, the chip
4 comprising a frequency monitor circuit (FMC) that includes:

5 a reference window generator (RWG), operative to output
6 a reference window signal, the reference window having a
7 given duration;

8 a monitored clock counter (MCC), responsive to said
9 reference window signal and to any one of the monitored
10 clocks and operative to count all pulses in the respective
11 monitored clock that occur within the duration of said
12 reference window and to output a corresponding pulse count;
13 and

14 at least two comparators, responsive to said pulse
15 count, each comparator being operative to compare said pulse
16 count with a respective given threshold value and to output
17 a corresponding indication of frequency deviation.

1 16. The integrated circuit chip of claim 15, wherein
2 said FMC further includes a storage and logic module (SLM),
3 responsive to outputs of comparators, wherein RCC, MCC and
4 comparators are operative to function periodically and the SLM
5 is operative to store any indication output by the comparators,
6 the stored indications being available for readout.

1 17. The integrated circuit chip of claim 16, wherein
2 said SLM is further operative to process the stored indications
3 to obtain statistical information about the frequency of any of
4 the monitored clocks.

1 18. The integrated circuit chip of claim 17, wherein
2 said statistical information includes indication of a trend in
3 frequency deviation.

1 19. The integrated circuit chip of claim 15, further
2 including at least one clock generator and wherein the output of
3 any of said generators is one of the monitored clocks.

1 20. The integrated circuit chip of claim 19, wherein
2 said generator includes a phase locked loop (PLL).

1 21. The integrated circuit chip of claim 19, wherein
2 said generator is a frequency multiplier.

1 22. The integrated circuit chip of claim 21, wherein
2 said RWG and said MCC form part of said frequency multiplier.

1 23. The integrated circuit chip of claim 15, wherein
2 there is further provided on the chip a reference clock and
3 wherein said RWG includes a reference clock counter (RCC),
4 responsive to the reference clock and operative to count a given
5 number of reference clock pulses and wherein the beginning of
6 said reference window coincides with the beginning of said
7 counting and the end of said reference window coincides with the
8 end of said counting.

1 24. The integrated circuit chip of claim 23, further
2 including a clock generator of the frequency multiplier type,
3 whose output is a monitored clock, wherein said RCC and said MCC
4 form part of said clock generator.

1 25. The integrated circuit chip of claim 15, wherein
2 said at least one clock is at least two clocks, the FMC further
3 comprising a selector, responsive to the monitored clocks and
4 operative to switch any one of them into the MCC.

1 26. The integrated circuit chip of claim 25, the chip
2 forming part of a digital system and at least one of the
3 monitored clocks being generated, within the system, outside the
4 chip.

1 27. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 25, wherein
2 the duration of said reference window is different for each
3 monitored clock.

1 28. The frequency monitor circuit of claim 25, wherein,
2 for any of said comparators, the respective threshold value is
3 different for each monitored clock.